

1969

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1,

SOVIET PRESSING SHOOTING INQUIRY

Kremlin Gunman Said to Be Army Officer in 20's

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Jan. 31 — Soviet security authorities were reported today to be continuing with the questioning of a gunman seized in the Kremlin last week after firing at a motorcade carrying Soviet astronauts and government leaders. The authorities are reported also to be inquiring into his motives and background.

According to persistent reports circulating in Moscow, the man being held is an army officer in his twenties who was absent without leave from his unit in Leningrad and who, at the time of the shooting, was dressed in a policeman's uniform obtained from relatives in Moscow.

He was detained on Jan. 22 immediately after having fired several pistol shots at the ceremonial procession carrying astronauts and Soviet officials to a mass meeting in the Kremlin's Palace of Congresses.

Although the limousine attacked in the incident carried astronauts, the gunman is presumed to have fired at the closed car in the belief that it carried Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Communist party leader, and President Nikolai V. Podgorny.

Suicide Report Denied

Informed sources denied a report published today in the United States in The Washington Post that the gunman had committed suicide during the arrest by swallowing a cyanide capsule. It was also previously reported that he had been man-

handled by bystanders and had been prevented from taking poison.

According to the informed sources, the assailant not only was alive but was carrying no poison of any kind on his person when he was seized.

The sources said that the chauffeur of the astronauts' car, who was struck in the head by three bullets, died today without having regained consciousness. His death from wounds had been reported on several previous occasions in the last week.

A member of the motorcycle escort was less seriously injured and Maj. Gen. Georgi T. Beregovoi, one of the astronauts, was reported to have been superficially nicked by flying glass.

An official statement on the present condition of the assailant and the status of the investigation was reported to be in preparation.

Statement Issued by Tass

The only official information issued thus far was a brief announcement by Tass, the Soviet press agency, the day after the incident, when news of the shooting first began to spread in Moscow.

As a presumed attempt against the lives of Soviet leaders, committed within the Kremlin, the shooting incident is understood to be under the jurisdiction of the State Security Committee, which is concerned with internal security in the Soviet Union. Less serious crimes are investigated by the civilian police.

Other aspects in the case are believed to require a long and exhaustive investigation. They include the circumstances under which the gunman obtained his weapon and ammunition as well as the uniform he apparently used as a cover.

Although shotguns and rifles are available in the Soviet Union for hunting and sports

purposes, there are heavy restrictions on the sale and distribution of pistols and revolvers. Ammunition for these weapons is even more difficult to obtain.

The accounts that identified the gunman as a Leningrad army officer—named Ilyin, according to one report—said that he took his service pistol and ammunition with him when he disappeared from his unit. It is presumed that as an officer he had access to ammunition, which is normally not freely issued to troops in peacetime.

NY TIMES 7 FEB 69

Early Trial Reported Set In Shooting Case in Soviet

MOSCOW, Feb. 6 (UPI) — Informed sources said today that the investigation of a shooting incident in Moscow last month was nearing completion and that the gunman would be tried shortly.

The incident occurred Jan. 23. Four Soviet astronauts were riding in a motorcade car when it was stuck by gunfire. The driver of the car died from three gun wounds. Soviet leader were also riding in the motorcade.

The case, regarded as a capital political crime, falls within the jurisdiction of the military collegium of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union.